Tricks and Tips for Fieldwork Supervision: Learning Objectives

Learning objectives… friend or foe? Many of you who have attended an educators workshop in the past few years have probably come away from that day promising yourself that you would revitalize or generate new learning objectives for your student program. It is a large component of the OT student evaluation while they are on placement but is often perceived as an overwhelming task. Here are a couple of tips to get you on the road to writing objectives!

Reasons for Learning Objectives:

- They clearly define realistic expectations of the placement relevant to the level of student
- It is more important that the student is exposed to an array of **quality** learning opportunities rather than a large **quantity** of learning opportunities

Steps in Developing Instructional Objectives:

- **Avoid:** cramming too much into one objective, or being too vague.

Remember, an objective is a statement that describes in <u>precise, measurable terms</u> what the student will be able to do by the end of the placement

The behaviour element in an objective is a phrase containing **an action or behavioural verb** that ties what the learner is to perform or exhibit to the object of the behaviour- this needs to be reflective of the level of student- for example being able to critically appraise something is at a higher level than describing something, therefore the first example could possibly be for level 3 students and the latter example for a level 1 student.

A **crucial element** of an objective is: "How well do students need to achieve an objective in order for their performance to be judged satisfactory?" This will also be different for each level of student. Level 1 students most likely will do something with supervision and level 3 students will be demonstrating aspects of their performance independently.

In addition, all good objectives should be SMART-

S - specific
M- measurable
A - achievable
R - realistic
T - time oriented

Please refer to page 6 of your COTBC continuing competency program- Guide to completing the self-assessment and professional development plan for additional information on writing SMART goals.

So, where do we want to see Learning Objectives in the UBC OT student program? My vision is that each fieldwork site would have a databank of student learning objectives in the 7 competencies of practice. Each objective could then be tailored to the level of student by merely changing the action or behavioral verb to reflect their current level. Additionally, the number of times a student would be expected to do something could also change (increase) based on the level of placement. Clear as mud? Here is **one** example only of a learning objective in each of the 7 competencies (competencies from the Competency Based Fieldwork Evaluation Form – see attached).